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S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable the
LORDS Spiritual and Temporal in
PARLIAMENT assembled,

In the ABBEY-CHURCH, *Westminster*,
On MONDAY, Jan. 30, 1748-9;
Being the Day appointed to be observed as the Day
of the Martyrdom of King CHARLES I.

By ZACHARY, Lord Bishop of Bangor.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCXLIX.

Die Martis 31 Januarii, 1748-9.

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and they are hereby given, to the Lord Bishop of *Bangor*, for the Sermon by him Preached before this House Yesterday in the Abbey-Church, *Westminster*; and he is hereby desir'd to cause the same to be printed and published.

ASHLEY COWPER,
Cler. Parliamentor.

ACTS xxiii. 5.

Then said Paul, I wist not, Brethren, that he was the High-Priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.

IN the last Journey, which St. Paul made to Jerusalem, he had a full Proof of what the Holy Ghost had witnessed concerning him, that Bonds and Afflictions were every where to be his Portion: For, being arrived at that City, he went up to the Temple during seven Days, upon the last of which, some Jews of Asia (who probably had known him in that Country) stirred up all the People, which were present, to lay their hands upon him. The Outcry against him was this, that his Preaching every where was against the Law, and that holy Place: and to help out the Charge they added, that he had brought Heathens along with him into the Temple, and had thereby polluted that Court, which was appropriated to those of the Circumcision only. The Accusation was false in Fact; but a Multitude is apt easily to believe, and easily to be inflamed: An uproar therefore was made, and the Apostle was seized, and drag'd out of the Temple by the enraged Zealots, with intent to make

his Life a Sacrifice to their Fury. But the chief Captain (who was the superior *Roman* Officer there) came in with his band of Soldiers time enough to *St. Paul's* assistance; and having taken him out of the hands of those mischievous *Jews*, he secur'd him in the Castle of *Antonia*, a Place by its Height over-looking the Temple, and by its Communication having the entire Command of it. Thus he had rescued him from the murderous Rabble, but his Intention was not to rescue him from Justice: and therefore *on the morrow* he commanded the Chief-Priests & all their Council to appear, and he brought Paul down from the Castle, and set him before them. Chap. xxii. 30.

Here then was a National Court of the *Jews* assembled, and the Apostle was placed before them at the Bar: Where when he had begun to make an Apology for himself, saying, *Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conscience before God, until this Day*, xxiii. 1. The High-Priest *Ananias*, who sat there as his Judge, commanded them, that stood by him, to smite him on the Mouth, ver. 2. But what could be more Partial, than such a Behaviour in the Judge, who check'd *St. Paul* so very roughly in the entrance upon his Speech? especially as it was his Innocency only, which the Apostle had asserted: And what hope was there of Justice from Him, who not only stop'd him so soon, but commanded others to use such an
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Act of Violence? It was upon this Occasion, that the Apostle broke out into the following Expressions, *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the Law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the Law?* ver. 3.

This Language was very extraordinary, considering not only *from* whom it came, but *to* whom it was directed: Those therefore, who stood by, said, *Revilest thou God's High-Priest?* ver. 4. To which Reprimand St. Paul answer'd, as in the Text, *I wist not, Brethren, that he was the High-Priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.*

To account for these Words of the Apostle, several ways have been attempted.

Some suppose him strictly to mean, that he did not *know* it to be the High-Priest, who gave the Order for *smiting* him. They imagine, that there was such a Crowd and Confusion at the Trial, that he might easily mistake the Speaker, and think that it was some private Person in the Assembly. But St. Paul's own Words confute this Supposition: for he said, *Sittest thou to judge me after the Law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the Law?* To the Judge he directed his Reply, and therefore *from* the Judge he well knew the Injury to have proceeded.

Others suppose, that *Ananias* had procur'd this Office by Bribery; and that therefore St. Paul meant,

meant, that he did not *know*, i. e. acknowledge him to be the High-Priest. But to this, among (a) many other Things, it may be reply'd, that, the *Jewish* Council then acting in Concert with *Ananias* as their High-Priest, it is not likely, that a Prisoner at the Bar would venture to make this Objection there. Besides, St. Paul seems to have *acknowledg'd* him for such but the Day before, (as we are told in Chap. xxii. 5.) where speaking, I think, of this very *Ananias*, he said, *The High-Priest also doth bear me witness, and all the State of the Elders, from whom I received letters unto the Brethren, &c.*

I prefer therefore a third Opinion, which gives a more justifiable Sense to the Words: for ἔκ ἡδὲν, which is here translated *I wist not*, i. e. *I did not know*, may be translated, *I had not consider'd*, *I had not attended to it*, or *carry'd it in my Mind*. Thus in *Eccles.* v. 1. what the Greek Version of the Seventy, agreeably to the Original Hebrew, has render'd by ὅτι ἔκ ἐστὶν εἰδότες, &c. is well translated in our English Bible, *for they consider not, that they do Evil*: and thus St. Paul was used to speak, as appears from (b) several Passages in his Writings, particularly from 1 Thess. v. 12. *We beseech you, Brethren, (τῷ εἰδέναι) to know them,*

(a) If St. Paul had meant, that he did not acknowledge *Ananias* to be the High-Priest, it is probable, that St. Luke would not have represented him, as saying, ἔκ ἡδὲν *I had not acknowledged*, but ἢ κ' εἰδέω or ἔκ ὀίδα *I do not acknowledge*, &c.

(b) See 1 Cor. ii. 2. and Chap. xvi. 15, 18. See also John xx. 9.

which labour among you; i. e. to consider, regard, and be mindful of such Teachers.

The same Thing St. *Paul* may be suppos'd to mean by the same Word in the Text. He acknowledged, that those Words of his, *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall*, had proceeded from too much Hastiness and Impatience of Temper; that under too quick a Sense of the Injury, which he had received, he had made that improper and indecent Reply. He had not sufficiently *consider'd* at that time, that it was a Magistrate to whom he spake; he had acted contrary to what the Law of *Moses* directed, when it said in *Exod. xxii. 28. Thou shalt not revile the Gods* (i. e. the Judges), *nor curse the Ruler of thy People*. The Magistrates in general, whatever their Office or Title might be, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, were guarded by this Law against the Licentiousness of evil Tongues: And therefore St. *Paul* very rightly quoted it by way of a free and open acknowledgment to *Ananias*, that he had taken a Liberty which was unbecoming, and had acted inconsistently with the Duty, which he owed to him as a Magistrate.

This seems to be the plain and easy sense of the Words of the Text, and the Observations, which I shall make upon it, shall be these two.

[1] How natural it is for the best of Men, when treated injuriously by their Magistrates, to shew their Resentments, and express with some Freedom

dom their quick Sense of the Injuries which they feel.

[2] That Men of this Character, knowing what Laws and Obligations they are under towards their Magistrates, are always ready to stop short, before Passion carries them too far; and, tho' they may suffer Injuries, they will never lose the Sight of their Duty. And, under each of these Heads of Discourse, I shall apply, what shall be said, to the Occasion of assembling ourselves here on this solemn Day of Humiliation.

[1] Then, it may be observed from hence, how natural it is for the best of Men, when treated injuriously by their Magistrates, to shew their Resentments, and express with some Freedom their quick Sense of the Injuries which they feel.

You see, that it was the Case of St. *Paul* himself: As patient as his Sufferings for the Gospel had made him in the general, yet they left him still in possession of his natural Passions, however greatly subdued. He did not cease to be a *Man*, by becoming an *Apostle*. In truth, our Passions were given to us, that they might encourage and lead us to the Duty of Self-preservation: and, when Injustice is done, it is as little relish'd from the Hand of a Governor as of an Equal. Nay, in the former Case it is apt to be in some Views of it more fretting and painful, because it comes without any immediate prospect of a Remedy: and with this Aggravation to embitter it, that it comes
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from that Hand, which should not only itself forbear, but should restrain all others from the Violence.

Thus (in the Instance, to which my Text relates) the High-Priest, when presiding over the *Jewish* Council at St. *Paul's* Trial, should have taken care, that the Trial and Judgment proceeded according to the Law. But, when, before any thing was proved against the Prisoner, he *commanded him to be smitten*, the Injury was visible, and the Provocation so great, that it carry'd the Apostle to express his Sense of it, not only in Words of Warmth, but of Reproach.

In this (it is true) he did not copy after his divine Master, who, *when he was reviled, reviled not again*. Nor did he suit himself then to what 1 Pet. ii. 23. he had taught his *Roman* Converts, when he said Chap. xii. ver. 14. *Bless them which persecute you, and curse not*; or to what had been his own usual Behaviour, as he described it in 1 Cor. Chap. iv. ver. 12, 13. *Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it*: For St. *Paul* (tho' a most excellent Christian) was yet not exempt from all human Frailty, was not *without spot and blemish* in his Conduct, as his great Master was: He return'd the Injury therefore, as far as Words could do it.

And much less can it be expected, that a People (for if you look round the whole World, you will never find one Country, in which the Gene-

ality of its Inhabitants are either Saints or Philosophers,) I say therefore, that it can much less be expected, that the Passions of a People should not be raised, when they are *smitten contrary to the Law* by those, whose Office it is to *sit and judge them after the Law*.

This, in justice to Truth, we must own to have been the Case in the beginning of those unhappy times, which usher'd in that unnatural Rebellion, and led the way to the most wicked and detestable Murder of the King, for which we have been this Day deprecating the divine Vengeance.

It was his great Misfortune, that in the first Parliaments, which he called, the Representatives of the People were so attentive to Enquiries and Complaints about Grievances only, that they refused or neglected to make any Provision for the Wants of either the State, or their Sovereign and his Family. And, as they had failed in that part of their Duty, they laid him not only under a Necessity of doing all that he could for his relief by virtue of the *Law*; but under a strong Temptation of doing all that he was suppos'd to be empower'd to do by virtue of his *Prerogative*; the Boundaries of which at that time had never been well settled. Hence it was, that for remedy of this great and pressing Evil, under which both the Publick and Himself labour'd, some Monies were rais'd upon the Subjects, for his yearly Supply,

ply, without Authority of Parliament, tho' for the most part in imitation of what had been without any publick Censure often practised on the like Occasions. Hence some obsolete Laws were reviv'd, lucrative to the Prince, but burdensome to the People, and *therefore* the more burdensome to the People, because the Weight of them for so long a time had not been felt. Hence some Acts of State were made use of to supply the Defect of Laws; which Acts, however unwarrantable, had many Precedents in former Reigns, sufficient, tho' not to justify them, yet at least to keep them in countenance.

If any Man should affirm, that in some of the first Years of his Reign no wrong Steps were taken by the King towards his Subjects at large, and towards their Representatives in Parliament, either thro' the ill Advice unhappily given by those who were his well-intention'd Servants, or thro' the worse Advice insidiously given by those who were his secret Enemies, he must speak a Language very different from that of the noble Historian, who best knew, and has best represented the Transactions of those Times; and who seems (if ever any did) to have carry'd in view throughout his whole Work the Duty in an Historian, of having the Honesty to say *nothing* that he knew to be False, and the Courage to say *every thing* that he knew to be True.

The Behaviour of the King therefore in such Instances, as have been mention'd, was grievous, since by those Methods of Proceeding, the Liberty of the Subjects in some Cases, and their Property in others, was render'd more uncertain. It has been observ'd indeed, that as high Instances of Power and Sovereignty, upon both the Liberty and Property of the Subject, are to be found in some of the former Reigns, even in the best of them: But then two Circumstances, which belonged to those in the Times of which I am speaking, shewed the great Unskilfulness of such as without distinguishing aright, had recourse to those Precedents. The Manner, in which those Acts of the Prerogative were exercised in this Reign, was often ungracious and disobliging; the Necessity of them being not so well known, as the Severity of them was felt, and the Passion of the Judges in their Decisions, sitting heavier sometimes upon the Sufferer than the Weight of the Judgment. To this we may add, as what is still more material, that the Times were not the same as in those former Reigns; the Subjects were not now dispos'd to bear even the Sight of such Usage in Others, which their Ancestors, when they Themselves were loaded with it, sat down under with Patience. By the great Extent of the national Commerce, and by the great Increase of the Riches, which flowed in thro' that Channel,
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the Commons were grown a more robust, and (if I may so speak) a more vital Part of the Political Body ; and, as their Property was greatly enlarg'd, so were their Notions and their Love of Liberty: it being natural for Men, the more they possess, the more to endeavour at the securing themselves undisturbed in the Possession of it.

How then could it be expected, that such Men, so treated, would not murmur and complain? or that their Representatives would not by Petition, Remonstrance, and every other Legal way try to ease the People from a Yoke, to which their Necks had never been well fitted, and with which (as things then stood with them) they could not but be more sensibly galled? So far all Opposition was commendable, as it was their Duty ; and some of their future Steps in Parliament would have been excusable, if they had known where to desist ; the Subject having as Natural, and, in this Nation, as Legal a Right to the securing of his Liberty and Property, as the Sovereign has to the preserving of his Dignity and Prerogative.

What I chiefly mean on this head, is, that Princes can never reasonably hope, that, if their Subjects are injur'd, they will not complain and be restless, till the Causes of their Complaints are remov'd. A quick Sense of Injuries is founded in human Nature. *St. Paul* himself was not free from it, and it is no wonder if Men less perfect,

perfect, than He, open their Mouths in Complaints, whenever they receive any ill Treatment from the Magistrate.

[2] Let it be observed farther, that Men of *St. Paul's* Character, and such as know, what Laws and Obligations they are under towards their Governors, are always ready to stop short, before Passion carries them too far, and, tho' they may suffer Injuries, they will never lose the sight of their Duty.

You have in this too *St. Paul's* Example: and surely, if Men can think to excuse themselves by one less warrantable Part of his Behaviour, they ought to learn from the other more laudable Parts of it. *I wist not*, (said the Apostle) *that he was the High-Priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.* Provoked as he was, and justly provoked, he did not insist upon it, as a Right, to do what he had done. He did not justify, but retract it; and by quoting what he did, he made an open and ingenuous Acknowledgement, both that he had committed a Fault, and that the Law was the Rule of his Obedience to the Magistrate.

If those, for whose shocking Crimes we are this Day humbling ourselves before God, had copy'd from this Part of the Apostle's Behaviour, and had call'd to their Mind a Sense of the Laws of their Country, which were the Measure of their Duty, they would never have gone such
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fatal Lengths, as they did, till their ill Humours, which at first shew'd themselves by Petitions and Remonstrances only, swell'd into seditious Attempts; and at last broke out into the foulest Rebellion; till their Ordinances of Parliament became heavier Burdens even to the People, than any Acts of State had ever been, (for if these were *Whips*, those were *Scorpions*, without Colour illegal, and without Measure oppressive); till by Violence they forc'd from their just Share in the Legislature two out of the three Estates of the Realm; till they overthrew, and try'd to dig up the very Foundations of the Episcopal Church, and even the Monarchy itself; till with the most consummate Hypocrisy, under the Colour of Loyalty, they rais'd Armies, fought with, and vanquish'd their King; and at last with the most consummate Wickedness, under the Colour of Justice, the Few, who called themselves the Parliament, by the Influence of their own Armies, which were then their Masters, did That to his Person, which calls for our Prayers in the Service of this Day, that this Land may be freed from the Vengeance of his righteous Blood.

And let no one think, that all this was the necessary Result of Self-defence. Distinguish but the Times, and you will find, that their Actions are to be distinguished accordingly: For every Grievance, of every kind, either real or supposed, had been redress'd long before those impious Arms
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had been taken up; so fully redressed, that both Houses of Parliament had under a Sense of Gratitude, tho' a short-liv'd one, declar'd, that they had *sufficiently provided for the Security of the Commonwealth*. Not to forget, that, besides this, the King had consented to depart from the undoubted Rights of his Crown in so many and such Instances, that his People had their Security placed in their own Hands, and were trusted with more Power than (as the Event shew'd) they knew how to make a good Use of. For the Arts of designing Men soon found out a way to rekindle Suspicions and stir up Jealousies, about the Intentions of the King and his Ministry. Hence many began daily to make larger Draughts upon their Duty, to support the factious Measures in which they were engag'd: and such as foresaw, that their Crimes were too great, if forgiven, to be ever forgotten, seem to have been desperately determin'd, (some of them very early), that the only Pledge for their Safety should be the Ruin of their Sovereign; not without a secret Hope, that what State of Things should succeed to Monarchy, would prove a fine Pasture for the full Range and Feed of their wild Ambition.

In every other View than this, it may seem strange, that a violent Death, so outrageous in the Manner of it, should be the sad Portion of a King, who had some Publick Virtues, which
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one might naturally have expected, would have made both Himself, and his People happy; who was possess'd of so many private Virtues, (without any one Vice to fully them) that the addition of a Crown was almost a superfluous thing to his Character: it seem'd perfect without it. And if these did not shine out so bright and conspicuous in the former Part of his Reign, (for Prosperity gives to but few of those Virtues their full Lustre), yet the latter Part of it, that in which he struggled with Labours, Misfortunes, Insults, and Trials, greater perhaps than ever fell to the Lot of any King, afforded the clearest Proof, that he had a sense of Honour and Dignity, a firmness of Mind, and Integrity of Conscience never to be shaken or depressed.

But let us call off our Thoughts from this disagreeable View of what was the Sin and the Shame of those former Days; and let us consider, how We may all learn to be more wise and more innocent, than our Forefathers then were; how We may profit by avoiding every Step, which insensibly led them on to that Misery and Confusion, under which this Nation for about twenty Years languished.

Let such, as are invested with supreme Power, be ever mindful, that no Height or Greatness is sufficiently secur'd, unless it be establish'd upon the general Love and Good-will of their People.

If they would have Glory, it must be founded on Merit followed with publick Esteem; Glory being only the World's Seal set to acknowledg'd Worth.

Let such too, as serve the Crown in the great Offices of State, and assist it by their Counsels, learn from the Experience of past times, how useful it is, that all the publick Measures, which are taken, should be made appear to be both *just* and *necessary*; and with the greater care to make them appear *necessary*, the more easily Suspensions may be raised to the disadvantage of the *Justice* of them. Let them be studious to shew, that the general Good and their Master's Honour are their first Concern, and that all other private Considerations are but inferior ones: and thus (bad as the World is) they will probably best provide for the Interests of themselves, and of those whom they serve. Whenever any Difficulties arise (and such the wisest and best must expect to find), let them meet them, not as some in that Reign did, who trusted to the loose texture of temporary Expedients, but meet those Difficulties and encounter them at first with Law and Reason, with Prudence and Courage on their Side. But, above all, let them labour to gather up and tie together the Affections of the People to their Sovereign, that he may reign in their Hearts, and be as much secur'd in his Throne by their Wills, as by the Laws. For this purpose let them be sure to frame or countenance

nance the framing of such Laws, as are truly Popular; Popular, because extensively useful: Especially, whenever the Reasons of State may make it necessary to impose such things as may seem Grievances, then is the time for thus wisely qualifying and tempering them, by giving the People such Blessings as they can *feel*, to soften those things, which they may *fancy* to be Hardships.

To the Subjects in general no less useful Matter of Instruction arises from the sad Story of this Day. Let them learn from thence, how closely connected their Safety and Happiness are with those of their Sovereign: the Golden Chain of them is fasten'd to the Throne, and is sure never to be more in danger, than when Violence is done to That. Let them from a Review of the infinite Mischiefs, which false Suggestions and lying Rumours then occasion'd, learn not only not to be wicked in framing, but to be backward in admitting and believing Reports to the Disadvantage of their Sovereign, and his Administration. A Lye in its progress is, like a Rabble, always gathering and increasing. One Man tells a thing as a *Suspicion* of his own, and the next, when he has heard it, publishes that *Suspicion* as what is *probable*: a third taking the Story into his bountiful Hands, speaks of that as *certain*, which when heighten'd came to him only as *probable*: till at last, to make the Story a staple and marketable one, it is often sent forth from the Press, and with this Pass the Vagrant, tho' a Cheat, travels

travels over the whole Kingdom with Security to itself, but Mischief to all others.

Let them in the next Place frequently and seriously reflect upon the Blessings of a regular and established Government, and not be blind to the happy Advantages which they daily receive from it. For this good purpose, let them consider not only what they *want*, but what they *have*. The standing Blessings of such a happy Government, as we at present live under, are too easily overlooked, not because they are small, but because they are common. In this respect it fares with many Men, as it does with some in private Life, who enjoying all the main Comforts of it, Health, Riches, Esteem, and perhaps Power too, can yet make themselves miserable, because they cannot obtain some little Good, which they have set their Minds upon; and so, forgetting what they *are*, they estimate their Condition by what they *are not*. Whereas in all settled governments almost the Evils are few and small in comparison of the Blessings, which are manifold and important: and it is no fair way of stating any Account, to charge all on one Side only, and leave out the Articles, in which we are Debtors.

Let them learn thankfully to acknowledge the Justice and the Gentleness of His present Majesty's Administration: that Justice, of which all Men may gather the Fruits; that Gentleness, of which the Offenders against his Justice do so often
feel

feel the Benefits: a King, who makes it his Endeavour (and it is his Glory) to subdue Ill-will by Clemency, and shew even to the Disloyal, that he is an Object worthy of their Loyalty: just such a King, as they wish for, when they would obtain Pardon; tho' not such an one, as they wish for, when they would pay Allegiance.

And let none of all his Subjects contend, that the Observation of this Day ought to be abolish'd; that a full round of One Hundred Years has now pass'd since the blackest of those black Crimes was committed, and that therefore the Guilt of them all may be reckon'd by a fair Conclusion to be remitted to this Nation. For, while we *see*, while we *feel* the sad Effects still subsisting of those dreadful Causes, my Tongue can never pronounce, that this Nation has paid as yet the full Debt to Divine Justice; so as that our annual Prayers on this Occasion are to be thought unnecessary and superfluous. There is still in being, abroad, one Family of profess'd Claimants to his Majesty's Crown; a Family bred up in the full Belief of that Religion, the Suspicion of but *favouring* which brought such irreparable Mischiefs to the Cause of the Royal Martyr. To that Rebellion it was owing, that his Sons were forc'd to seek their Shelter in foreign Countries, from whence one of them at least return'd in Communion with the Church of *Rome*; a Gift, which he took care to convey to Him, who has so often

interrupted our Happiness, and so much swell'd the Articles of our national Expences. Too late an Instance is fresh in all our Minds, while the Wounds, which were then given, are scarcely healed. With me therefore it is all clear Consequence, that we have still reason for the Remembrance of this Day, for the devout Prayers which it appoints, and the useful Instruction which it directs against *Disobedience and wilful Rebellion*, when such a Family subsists with Power, as well as Will, to molest us; which can only happen, while any, who should be faithful Subjects, hold their Allegiance in readiness for a *Free-will-Offering* to those, whom our Laws, the Reason of Things, Common Sense, and (we trust) the divine Will has for ever excluded from the Imperial Throne of these Kingdoms.

F I N I S.

